

State of Arizona
COMMISSION ON JUDICIAL CONDUCT
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News Release

SUPREME COURT CENSURES FORMER JUSTICE OF THE PEACE

PHOENIX. The Commission on Judicial Conduct announced today that the Arizona Supreme Court has censured former justice of the peace Lester Pearce for misconduct while in office. Mr. Pearce served as a justice of the peace in Maricopa County from 1997 to April 30, 2012.

The court's decision was based on a stipulated resolution between disciplinary counsel and the judge in which the judge did not contest that his conduct, as described in the stipulated resolution, violated Rules 1.3, 4.1(A)(2), 4.1(A)(3), and 4.1(A)(5) of the Arizona Code of Judicial Conduct, and constituted conduct prejudicial to the administration of justice that brings the judicial office into disrepute, a violation of Article 6.1, Section 4, of the Arizona Constitution. Rule 1.3 provides that a judge "shall not abuse the prestige of judicial office to advance the personal or economic interests of the judge or others, or allow others to do so." Rule 4.1(A)(2) prohibits a judge from making speeches on behalf of a political organization or another candidate for public office. Rule 4.1(A)(3) prohibits a judge from endorsing or opposing another candidate for any public office. Rule 4.1(A)(5) prohibits a judge from actively taking part in any political campaign other than his own campaign for election, reelection or retention in office. Both the hearing officer appointed to hear the formal charges against the judge and the Commission on Judicial Conduct recommended the court approve the stipulated resolution.

The commission is an independent state agency with disciplinary jurisdiction over all state and local judges. It is composed of six judges, two attorneys, and three public members. The

commission investigates complaints and submits recommendations in formal cases to the Arizona Supreme Court for final decision.

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